

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Government's response
to the Postgraduate Review

JUNE 2011

Recommendations	Actions
Universities UK and Research Councils UK should do more to identify and promote the economic and social value of postgraduate study.	Stakeholders continue to work to enhance the evidence base and promote the value of postgraduate study to individuals and the economy.
The Government should do more to promote postgraduate study, building on existing campaigns to promote the potential benefits of higher education and skills.	The Government will promote postgraduate study as part of their wider higher education campaigns, ensuring that prospective postgraduate students understand the benefits of postgraduate studies.
The Teaching Quality Information steering group should consider extending the National Student Survey to include taught postgraduate students.	The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will liaise with Universities UK and GuildHE to prepare proposals which will be considered by the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group.
The Higher Education Academy should work with Universities UK to extend its Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) to more institutions and to improve the student response rate.	The PRES is being conducted again in 2011, with 102 institutions taking part, up from 82 in 2009.
Higher education institutions should use the flexibility afforded in funding from the higher education funding bodies and the Research Councils, to offer longer periods of postgraduate research funding and training where appropriate.	Research councils have given clear signals in their delivery plans that they will prioritise quality of PhD training, with many Doctoral Training Centres having four year programmes as standard.
Higher education institutions need to be more pro-active in providing postgraduates with the opportunity to develop the core competencies they need to succeed in a competitive job market.	All institutions were asked to publish 'employability statements' for the first time in 2010 and these are being reviewed in 2011. Vitae's researcher development framework will help higher education institutions to develop the skill-set for researchers.
Higher education institutions should ensure that transferable skills training is embedded as standard in the funding and design of all postgraduate research programmes.	Research Councils have announced that their funding for transferable skills training will be mainstreamed as this activity becomes a standard part of postgraduate research programmes.
Higher education institutions should work closely with Vitae, employers and other stakeholders to provide better information, advice and guidance on career choices for postgraduate research students.	Vitae continues to provide information, advice, resources and fora for individual postgraduate researchers' professional development and careers with publications such as "What do Researchers do?".
HEFCE should consider extending the Teaching Quality Information initiative to postgraduate level, and work with the	HEFCE will work with Universities UK and GuildHE, to prepare proposals on this for the Higher Education Public Information Steering

Higher Education Careers Service Unit, Universities UK and other key stakeholders to promote the development of a single, comprehensive source of up-to-date information about postgraduate study.	Group.
If respondents to Lord Browne's call for proposals have evidence on whether cost and access to finance are barriers to postgraduate education, they should include it in their response to the Review.	Lord Browne recommended no change to postgraduate funding and finance, but we will continue to monitor progression to postgraduate study as our reforms to undergraduate funding and finance take effect.
The Government should establish a working group with the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the higher education funding bodies, Universities UK and other stakeholders, to advise on what additional information should be collected about postgraduates, to inform future policy decisions on widening access to postgraduate study.	HEFCE will be preparing proposals on this, to be considered by the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group.
The higher education funding bodies and Research Councils UK should work together and engage with the UK Commission for Employability and Skills (UKCES), Sector Skills Councils and relevant bodies in the devolved administrations, to establish employer needs for postgraduate skills.	The new priorities of the UKCES will support this. It will supply the intelligence on evolving skills priorities that employers need to make the decisions about investment in and use of skills that best meet the needs of their businesses, and that enables them to work collaboratively, and through partnerships with universities and colleges on delivery.
The higher education funding bodies should work with Research Councils UK, UKCES and Sector Skills Councils, and relevant bodies in the devolved administrations, to identify how and where to fund provision that responds to employer needs for postgraduate skills.	As part of its consultation on the teaching grant method for 2012/13 and beyond, HEFCE will invite views on and consider how to support postgraduate teaching. The Research Councils have sought to increase the number of postgraduate research studentships which involve direct collaboration with business.
Higher education institutions should work with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to overcome any perceived barriers to quality assuring flexible postgraduate provision delivered partly in the workplace or by more than one higher education institutions.	The QAA continues to work with higher education institutions to quality assure flexible forms of provision.
Universities UK and the Sector Skills Councils should highlight and encourage best practice in the development and delivery of courses designed to involve	The sector has taken a lead in this area with publications such as Universities UK's Creating Prosperity: the role of higher education in driving the UK's creative economy and the 1994

and meet the needs of employers.	group's 'Industry Sponsored Master's Degrees' Innovative Practice Report.
Trade Associations and the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) should promote the value for employers of investing in postgraduate skills, by building on existing evidence about the link between postgraduates and productivity.	CIHE continue to promote the value of postgraduate skills, with events and publications such as "Talent Fishing" and "The Value of Graduates and Postgraduates".
UKTI should work with the International Education and Research Advisory Forum (IERAF), the British Council and Universities UK to identify ways to better promote UK postgraduate provision to governments, employers and students overseas.	David Willetts has taken over as chair of IERAF which will take the lead in coordinating the promotion of UK postgraduate provision overseas. Research Councils are working with the British Council and EU commission to attract research students to the European Research Area.
The QAA should continue to work with higher education institutions to ensure that UK postgraduate education delivered overseas maintains its international reputation for rigour and quality.	The QAA continues to work with higher education institutions to secure the international reputation of UK postgraduate education.
The UK Border Agency should monitor operational issues with the postgraduate student visa system to ensure there are no unintentional obstacles to entry.	New immigration rules mean there will continue to be no restriction on the numbers of legitimate overseas students in either further or higher education. From 2012, there will be no limit on the number of graduates who can stay on in graduate-level jobs.
Research Councils UK should examine ways of opening up more postgraduate research studentships to international students.	The Research Councils have indicated how they intend to facilitate the strategic recruitment of international research students in their delivery plans for 2011-15.
Higher education institutions must continue to ensure that their masters-level courses are compliant with the Bologna Process through the use of credits and learning outcomes.	We will continue to support higher education institutions' involvement in the implementation of the Bologna Process.
HEFCE should consider how future allocations of the research degree supervision grant (RDP) could be explicitly tied to research quality, rather than volume as at present.	HEFCE have recently consulted on their plans to reform the RDP funding stream and will implement changes in the academic year 2012/13.
Higher education institutions should work together with the Research Councils to develop more multi-disciplinary Doctoral Training Centres.	Research Councils have indicated how they intend to facilitate this in their delivery plans for 2011-15.

<p>In considering its response to the Independent Review's recommendations, and within the framework of the comprehensive spending review, the UK Government should take the opportunity to consider the appropriate level of public funding that should be invested in postgraduate provision.</p>	<p>The Government plans no further changes to postgraduate funding but we are committed to keeping this under review whilst monitoring participation in postgraduate study.</p>
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